

The Board of Supervisors

County Administration Building
651 Pine Street, Room 106
Martinez, California 94553

John Gioia, 1st District
Gayle B. Uilkema, 2nd District
Mary N. Piepho, 3rd District
Susan A. Bonilla, 4th District
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Contra Costa County



David Twa
Clerk of the Board
and
County Administrator
(925) 335-1900

May 12, 2010

Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Contra Costa County Comments on Interim Delta Plan

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Contra Costa County's insights for a proposed structure and components of the Council's Interim Delta Plan.

The recently enacted legislative water package created a close relationship between the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) and the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), primarily mandated through strong land use ties and an established DSC oversight role. It would therefore seem both appropriate and prudent for the Council to utilize as a foundational document for the Interim Plan, the DPC's Resource Management Plan which was revised and adopted earlier this year. The Resource Management Plan (RMP) offers very recently-updated background and policy guidance in the areas of land use, agriculture, natural resources, recreation, water, levees, and infrastructure that could serve exceptionally well in this context. It is probable that the RMP could evolve further as the Delta Plan is developed.

We would also respectfully request the Council to consider options for optimal levels of participation by the Delta Counties and other local agencies, organizations and individuals in your deliberations over short and long-term plans. Outreach for participation from these stakeholders should begin with development of the Interim Plan.

We see components of this document much as described in Water Code Section 85054, which includes recommendations for early actions, projects and programs. In addition, the Interim Plan should set the stage (identify and begin to shape components) for the longer-term Delta Plan.

We are all aware that even with its expedited schedule, the final water supply infrastructure ultimately proposed by the BDCP will not be in place for many, many years to come. As a result, we cannot continue to delay short and medium-term actions that have the ability to yield meaningful solutions and reduce risk to people, property, the ecosystem and our state's water supply. Despite the fact that a number of short-term actions have been discussed for years and many of these actions engender little controversy, few if any have been implemented. It is time to step up as a leadership body

and move toward implementing these short and medium-term actions that will provide results and reduce risk while longer-term solutions are being worked out.

For Contra Costa County, this includes specific short-term actions to improve the ecosystem, water quality, and the fishery. An initial list of these projects includes:

- Levee improvements: There are a number of strategic, high priority levee improvement projects that will clearly provide protection in the short and long term; among them are the western Delta islands and levees that protect important infrastructure and Delta communities.
- Continue the state levee subventions program at 75/25 cost share; support and work with Delta Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) and other federal programs such as Corps Levee Stability Improvement Program.
- Stockpiling of appropriate size rock at strategic locations in the Delta for purposes of emergency levee repair.
- Water quality and fishery improvements at Franks Tract: options in this area should be reexamined.
- Additional and improved fish screens at pumps.
- Subsidence reversal projects.
- Habitat improvement projects, such as the Dutch Slough restoration project.
- Emergency response planning activities: support and continued funding of existing programs; expanding components of these programs are paramount.
- The concept of a 'beneficiary-pays' long term financing structure needs to be worked on. Some initial concepts and a timeline need to be developed.
- Development of Delta problem identification and scientific analysis in the broader context (issues not otherwise covered through the BDCP process).

Other potential projects that have no clear identified or demonstrated benefits or projects mired in controversy should not be considered further, such as the 2-Gates Project. The federal government has said it sees little or no science to justify this project; no clear benefit to fish and is examining other options Delta-wide. Contra Costa County strongly recommends striking this project from the list.

The above-mentioned programs and projects are not specific to Contra Costa County and most have been debated over time. As a result we have not provided additional detail on these items. However if you have questions, or desire additional information, please contact Roberta Goulart of my staff at Roberta.Goulart@dcd.cccounty.us or (925) 335-1226.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mary Nejedly Piepho', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MARY NEJEDLY PIEPHO
Supervisor, District III

cc :

Contra Costa County Legislative Delegation
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Delta Counties Coalition